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duced in the South, corporations taking the place of individual proprietors. But where Mr. Bryce is cautious of treading, it will never do for his reviewer to rush in.

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The American Congress. A History of National Legislation and Political Events, 1774-1895. By JOSEPH WEST MOORE. New York, Harper & Brothers, 1895. — xii, 581 pp.

The chief title of this book leads one to expect a history of the formation and development of Congress, but the sub-title is more nearly descriptive of the contents and scope of the volume. It is a political history of the United States, giving the most important events, occasionally interlarded with excerpts from speeches or with well-worn anecdotes, — some of them, I fear, apocryphal, — and now and again devoting space to the *personnel* of Congress or to brief biographical sketches. There are some indications that good books and a modicum of original matter have been used, and the work is not marred by many serious inaccuracies. The style is clear, simple and straightforward. One seeking for a brief popular account of political deeds and misdeeds, from the Stamp Act Congress to the syndicate bond issue, will find this book on the whole the best that has been written in anything like the same compass.

Yet it is neither a history of Congress nor a history of politics in the United States. Were it the former, we should find an account of the origin, growth and influence of the committee system, the change in the Senate from a *quasi* privy council to a full-fledged upper chamber, the relations between the two houses and how they have come to hold their places and to work together; we should, beyond doubt, find also some study of the development of the speaker's office — one of the most noteworthy facts in our history. But the book is nearly silent on all these subjects. There is no mention of the influence of Henry Clay in exalting the powers of his position, and one might well believe that the functions and authority of Frederick A. Muhlenberg were not far different from those of Thomas B. Reed. In other words, this volume is in no true sense a history of Congress. There are occasionally good descriptions of great days in the arena of debate, as when Hayne contended with Webster, or when Douglas, Seward and Sumner struggled over slavery in the territories.

At times there are quotations that might better have been omitted. The Congressional Globe is dangerous ground for the unwary toiler who is not seeking out the course of legislation, but is looking for examples of oratory. He is almost sure to bring up a good deal of mud with his pearls. So here we have a page and more devoted to Lincoln's "coat-tail speech," which is said to have gained "considerable reputation." Few of Mr. Moore's readers ever heard of it before, and they were so much the better off. This early effort of Lincoln's shows him fresh from the mire of Illinois politics; it illustrates nothing in the history of Congress, and standing alone means nothing in the history of Lincoln. We are also treated to the details of the quarrel between Blaine and Conkling, — a quarrel, indeed, which had no slight effect upon our history. But when we read so much congressional billingsgate in the morning papers, it hardly seems necessary to reproduce in a book the masterpiece of scurrility which this incident called forth.

Were this book a history of American politics we should find in its five hundred pages some adequate, suggestive account of the origin of political parties, and their transmutations; but such questions have not awakened the writer's interest. His account of the formation of the Federalist and the old Republican parties leads one to think that the author is not quite sure of his ground. He makes no pretense anywhere of looking below the surface, but here it is doubtful if he examined even the surface with care. To the reorganization of parties in the administration of the younger Adams is devoted but one short paragraph. The Know-Nothings get off with eleven lines. The beginnings of the Republican Party are not more extensively treated. It is not my intention to chide Mr. Moore for laches in this particular, but simply to state what his book does not contain which one might expect to find there.

I have said that the book is not marred by serious inaccuracies. Perhaps all blunders are serious; but the general reader, for whom the book is professedly written, will not be misled as to the main course of events, and will not find any very important fact misstated. This is faint praise indeed; but one cannot conscientiously say more. A few examples will illustrate my meaning. On page 9 we are told that in 1763 "England received from France and Spain all their possessions in America except the western part of the province of Louisiana." Doubtless no intelligent reader will be misled into believing that. On page 84 the year of Hamilton's birth appears as 1751 — probably careless proof-reading. We are told that "General

Hull ingloriously surrendered the important post of Detroit, on the northern frontier, under circumstances which showed he was a traitor to his country." Nobody believes that now. Even the prejudiced court-martial, presided over by a general whose own failings had contributed to Hull's difficulties, did not dare to declare that the poor old man was worse than neglectful and cowardly. Again, we are told in all seriousness, as a very comfortable conclusion of the war of 1812, that England "had also found that the American army and navy were more than a match for her forces." Possibly such redundant patriotism has its place, but not in a real history. A curious and interesting form of error appears in the account of the Philadelphia convention. According to Mr. Moore, some conservative delegate suggested that it would be well to adopt "a plan composed of palliatives and half-measures. When Washington heard this injudicious suggestion he left the president's chair and spoke earnestly against it. During this speech he uttered these memorable words." Here follow the words which Gouverneur Morris put into Washington's mouth in a eulogy pronounced upon him in later years. Now as everybody knows, Madison declares in his notes that the president spoke but once, and then concerning the ratio of representation. If Washington ever used the words attributed to him, it was before the meeting of the convention; and, in fact, Morris's account is quite consistent with such a theory. This error is interesting because it illustrates the longevity and vitality of an attractive falsehood. Bancroft gave the story currency in his *History of the Constitution*, but asserted that the words were used just before there were enough delegates present to form a quorum. Mr. Fiske repeated the incident in his *Critical Period*, adding many imposing extras. Now Mr. Moore has given cause and occasion. We need not be surprised if the anecdote leads a thrifty and prosperous life for many decades to come.

It is not the purpose of this review to denounce Mr. Moore's book. Its title is misleading; it is not strictly accurate on minor matters; it does not always distinguish the important from the trivial; there is no pretense of profundity, no effort to give political events in perspective, no appreciation of causes. But with all its evident failings, as a mere narrative history the book is not unsuccessful. It is readable and interesting, and its blunders are harmless. It may find its way into the hands of those who would not read a more scholarly or profound work.

A. C. McLAUGHLIN.